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General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
2nd meeting
Thursday, 4 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Terrorist attacks in the United States

The Chairman: At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the entire membership of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, to extend the Committee's sincere condolences to the Government and people of the United States for the terrible loss in human lives and property they suffered as a result of the senseless and barbaric terrorist attacks in New York, in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere on 11 September. I also wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and to the people of New York. I request members to honour the memory of the innocent people who lost their lives in the attacks and in the aftermath.

The members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: Let me begin our proceedings by extending a warm and sincere welcome to all the delegations participating in the deliberations of the First Committee at this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that we will be working in a constructive manner during the current session.

My appreciation goes to all delegations for the confidence that they have placed in my country and me by electing me Chairman of this important Committee. I will endeavour to accomplish the tasks ahead of us in a manner that will justify the trust that members have so generously bestowed upon me.

Let me say how much I appreciate the very kind gesture of Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar in nominating me for the chairmanship at the Committee's first meeting. I request the representative of Myanmar to kindly convey, on behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf, our congratulations — and gratitude — to Ambassador U Mya Than on the outstanding manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the First Committee at the fifty-fifth session.

As I undertake my duty, I have to say that I will have to depend on the cooperation and assistance of the Committee's entire membership, as well as on the valuable experience, knowledge and competence of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, Mr. Chen Jian, the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Mohammad Sattar, and his Secretariat colleagues, who, I am sure, will contribute greatly to the success of our work. I know that the First Committee will benefit from their experience, and I look forward to their support in dealing with the many important issues before us.

I am fully aware that the tasks assigned to this Committee are complex and multifaceted, but, with members' help, guidance and indulgence, I intend to discharge my responsibilities with determination and impartiality, in order to ensure that our work is

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conducted in an orderly fashion and that our endeavours result in a successful conclusion of the work of the First Committee. The tasks before us are not easy, and I therefore count on the full and invaluable cooperation of all delegations.

Election of officers

The Chairman: Before we proceed to the election of the officers, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the decision that was taken by the General Assembly at its meeting back in 1971, on a beautiful 22 September, concerning the procedure for the election of officers of the Main Committees. According to the terms of that decision, the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will therefore follow that same procedure today. That being said, we shall now proceed to the election of our office holders.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall leave it to the Permanent Representative of my country, Mr. Abdallah Baali, to present in due course my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament and International Security Committee. I, too, would like to take this opportunity, however, to express to you our congratulations and our pleasure at seeing you preside over this Committee. I am confident that your chairmanship will be added to the long record of your skills and achievements, which are certainly praiseworthy. I would also like to assure you that my delegation is ready to cooperate fully with you. I wish you every success in your work.

I would also like to convey to you the greetings of Ambassador Abdelkader Mesdoua, who was a Vice-Chairman of this Committee at the previous session.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to propose today the candidacy of Mr. Lee Kie-cheon, Counsellor of the Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, as a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee for this session. Mr. Lee has held very important posts involving great responsibility in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Korea. He was Deputy Director of the Department of United Nations Affairs from 1990 to 1992. He was then Director of Information Planning Affairs and Director of United Nations Economic Affairs, from 1996 to 1997. Then he was Director of the Department of Disarmament and Nuclear Affairs, from 1998 to 1999. Mr. Lee also held a post in his country's Mission in Vienna, Austria, as Counsellor before the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other international organizations, from 1994 to 1995. At the Republic of Korea's Permanent Mission here in New York, he was appointed Counsellor for disarmament and international security affairs.

It should also be noted that Mr. Lee began his activities in the diplomatic field in 1979. Thus, his broad experience and expertise in the field of disarmament and international security would certainly support and strengthen his candidacy. I am confident that if he assumes the post of Vice-Chairman of our Committee, he will do much to help support the Chairman of our Committee. Therefore, I hope that the candidacy of Mr. Lee Kie-cheon will be supported by all delegations in our Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Algeria for his nomination of Mr. Lee Kie-cheon of the Republic of Korea for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I also wish to convey, through him, to my good friend Mr. Abdelkader Mesdoua, the Committee's appreciation for the distinction with which he carried out his duties and for his valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as a Vice-Chairman last year.

Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Mr. Lee Kie-cheon of the Republic of Korea elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

It was so decided.

Mr. Guani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I must begin by expressing my country's sense of solidarity with the Government and the people of the United States, which on 11 September were victims of a senseless demonstration of terrorism that deserves our most vigorous repudiation, and calls for global action to eliminate this scourge.

The work in the field of disarmament and international security are especially relevant during this session of the General Assembly. We wish to express to you, Ambassador Erdös, our satisfaction at seeing you conducting our work, and we wish you every possible

success. We would also like to express our great appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar, for the way in which he presided over our work in the previous session.

At the beginning of this new session, it is a special honour and pleasure for my delegation to nominate Ambassador Milos Alcalay as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. Mr. Alcalay has already been endorsed by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Ambassador Alcalay does not in fact need any introduction. In the short time that he has been the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations he has already demonstrated his eloquence and made substantial contributions to the work of the Organization as the Chairman of the Committee on Information. Moreover, we are certain that his contributions to the work of this important Committee of the General Assembly will be a continuation of his vast diplomatic, inter-parliamentary and academic experience in the course of many years of useful work.

In the course of his career, in which he has served with particular distinction, we recognize his eloquence speaking abilities in the Latin American Parliament and as a representative to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. As the true Bolivarian he is, is academic work has also been part of our integration process. He also represented his country in France, the European Community, Romania, Israel and, most recently, Brazil.

Our appreciation goes out to Ambassador Alcalay. We express the hope that his work as Vice-Chairman of the Committee will be crowned with success. Likewise, we convey the same wishes to the other members of the Bureau.

As the representative of Uruguay, I would also like to convey my thanks to my colleagues in the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the opportunity they have given me to represent them during the fifty-fifth session. To my colleagues Mr. Abdelkader Mesdoua of Algeria, Ms. Petra Schneebauer of Austria and Ratislav Gabriel of Slovakia I extend my great appreciation for their very effective and productive contributions to the work of the Bureau.

I would especially like to thank all the members of the Committee's secretariat for their constant and invaluable support. I wish Mr. Mohammad Sattar every success. Finally, I wish to recognize the very efficient Mr. Lin Kuo-chung for his many years of service to the Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Uruguay for his nomination of Ambassador Milos Alcalay to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I wish to extend to him the Committee's sincere appreciation for his own valuable contribution to the work of the Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Since there are no other nominations and I am going to repeat the same formal text, with the indulgence of the Committee, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Milos Alcalay elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of Austria, Mr. Robert Mueller.

Mr. Mueller (Austria) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Allow me to assure you of the Austrian delegation's full cooperation as you carry out your important task.

On behalf of my colleague, Ms. Petra Schneebauer, who has taken up her new duties in the office of the Austrian President, I have the honour and pleasure to nominate Mr. Stéphane De Loecker as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

Mr. De Loecker joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium in 1985. Two years later he joined the office of the Belgian Minister for Foreign Trade, where he worked on international trade issues, and became First Secretary of Belgium's delegation to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). From 1991 to 1993 Mr. De Loecker was the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the Western European Union in London. From 1993 to 1994 he was an administrator in the OECD secretariat, where he was in charge of writing economic reports on Germany and Greece. After three years as chargé d'affaires ad interim to the Belgian embassy in Burundi, Mr. De Loecker served his country as Ambassador to Ethiopia,

Eritrea and Djibouti from 1997 to 1999. During that time he also served as Belgium's special envoy for the Great Lakes region. In 1999 he briefly interrupted his diplomatic service in order to meet a new challenge, namely, coordinating international relations for the European soccer cup, *Euro 2000*. Since September 2000 Mr. De Loecker has been the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would also like to mention the fact that Mr. De Loecker is a fine example of a career diplomat who has never forgotten that there is a world beyond the diplomatic world. His various other interests include philosophy, opera and dance. I am also convinced that his other interests, in particular skiing and mountain climbing, will provide him with all the necessary perseverance to carry out his new tasks.

I hope that the Committee will elect Mr. De Loecker as Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I wish him every success in his important task.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Austria for his nomination of Mr. Stéphane De Loecker of Belgium to the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

I wish to convey to our Austrian colleague Ms. Petra Schneebauer the Committee's appreciation for the distinction with which she carried out her duties, and for her valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee as Vice-Chairperson last year.

As there are no other nominations, may I take it that, again in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with a secret ballot and to declare Mr. Stéphane De Loecker elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I would like to express my sincere and warm congratulations to Mr. Lee Kie-cheon, Ambassador Milos Alcalay and Mr. Stéphane De Loecker for their elections as Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee. I am certain that, with their profound experience and good knowledge in the field of disarmament, they will make a valuable contribution to the activities of the Committee.

Election of the Rapporteur

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Rastislav Gabriel, the Rapporteur of the First Committee at the fifty-fifth session.

Mr. Gabriel (Slovakia): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau who have just been elected. I wish you every success in discharging your responsibilities and duties and pledge my delegation's full support to your efforts in the course of the coming weeks.

I have the honour and pleasure to present the nomination of Ambassador Sylvester Ekundayo Rowe, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, for the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Mr. Rowe joined the Permanent Mission in 1997, after a distinguished career of more than 30 years in the United Nations Secretariat. He has been a member of the Sierra Leone delegation during the past four sessions of the General Assembly.

During the past four years, he has also served as his country's representative in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and in the Disarmament Commission. He was a Vice-Chairman of the Disarmament Commission in 1999 and a member of the Sierra Leone delegation to the 2000 Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Ambassador Rowe was a member of the Government's delegation to the 1999 peace talks with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement, which resulted in the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement. He was alternate representative to the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and he is currently the personal representative of the President of Sierra Leone to the preparatory process of the special session of the General Assembly on children.

A graduate of Syracuse University, Ambassador Rowe holds a doctorate degree in political science from the City University of New York. He is a member of the American Society of International Law and the author of articles and seminar papers on non-

alignment, United Nations peacekeeping and the legal aspects of peace and security activities in West Africa.

I propose Ambassador Rowe to be elected Rapporteur of the Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Slovakia for his nomination of Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. I should also like to thank him for his significant contribution to the work of the Committee last year, during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, as Rapporteur of the First Committee.

Since there are no other nominations for the post of Rapporteur, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador Sylvester Rowe of Sierra Leone elected as Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation?

I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I wish to express my sincere congratulations to Ambassador Sylvester Rowe upon his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee, and I now invite him to take the place reserved for him at this rostrum.

May I at this stage, while our colleague is taking his important position at the rostrum, draw the attention of the members of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

We have just done this. Therefore, in the light of rule 110 of the rules of procedure, I call on the representative of Myanmar, Ambassador Kyaw Tint Swe, to address the First Committee.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): On behalf of the delegation of the Union of Myanmar, and on the personal behalf of my friend and colleague Ambassador U Mya Than, the outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. It is a great pleasure for me to see you at the helm of this important Committee. I am confident that your able leadership and your dedication to the cause of disarmament will ensure that our deliberations in the First Committee will reach a successful conclusion.

Let me also express my warm congratulations to the three Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Milos Alcalay, Permanent Representative of Venezuela; Mr. Stéphane De Loecker, Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Lee Kie-cheon, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea; and the Rapporteur, Mr. Sylvester Ekundayo Rowe, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, for their well-deserved election to their respective posts.

We are privileged to have a highly efficient team presiding over the affairs of the First Committee at this important juncture. In our quest for peace and security, the importance and urgency of achieving the goal of complete and total disarmament are greater now than ever.

I should like to assure the Committee that, in its endeavour to contribute to this noble cause, it can count on the full cooperation of my delegation. I should like also to take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to all members of the delegations for their full support, without which we would not have had such a positive outcome during our chairmanship at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The Chairman: It is obviously a great source of satisfaction to me personally that the representative of Myanmar has pledged his cooperation with, and support for, the officers of this Committee in the performance of our duties.

I now call upon the representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Lee Kie-cheon.

Mr. Lee Kie-cheon (Republic of Korea): I am honoured to serve as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee. This Committee will assess the world security situation and deal with all disarmament issues for this year.

We have held lengthy discussions about the role of the First Committee. Some say that this Committee is valuable because of its global nature, because it is a

Committee in which universal membership is ensured and in which every Member State can address its own security and disarmament issues. On the other hand, others are of the view that this Committee is just another talk-shop where nothing substantive is produced and discussions on certain issues tend to be overly politicized.

I have been involved with United Nations issues for quite a few years, and in that time I have arrived at two conclusions. The first is that, compared with other Main Committees, the First Committee remains the most substantive, effective and focused. The second is that, whenever we deal with disarmament and security issues, we should keep the long term in mind due to the sensitive nature of these issues.

The large number of resolutions adopted by a vote clearly illustrates how much importance each delegation places on the issues discussed in this Committee.

Over the past year, we have witnessed more setbacks than gains in multilateral disarmament and arms control. We are now living in a world in which people and countries interact more closely thanks to advances in technology and globalization. However, some countries are still suffering from conflicts, and the international community is faced with the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

In addition, the terrorist attacks on the United States of America a few weeks ago have redefined the concept of a security threat in the twenty-first century. In the light of this, the First Committee should play its important role as a universal forum in which Member States can contribute to the promotion of peace and security through defining new security threats and revitalizing the multilateral disarmament and arms control process.

I will be very pleased to make a small contribution to strengthening the role of the First Committee in the coming year.

The Chairman: I look forward to the active cooperation of the representative of the Republic of Korea, Vice-Chairman of this Committee, and I am confident that I can count on his assistance.

I call on the representative of Venezuela, Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. Alcalay, (Venezuela), Vice-Chairman of the Committee (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank the representative of Uruguay most sincerely for his generous words addressed to me. I am also pleased sincerely to congratulate Uruguay on its splendid and effective work in the vice-chairmanship of the First Committee, alongside the other members of the Bureau who represented us here during the fifty-fifth regular session.

I also wish to say how truly honoured I feel in working with the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. André Erdös, the Ambassador of Hungary, in the important responsibility entrusted to us. Under his leadership and with his diplomatic experience, I and my colleagues from the Republic of Korea and Belgium, as well as the Rapporteur, the representative of Sierra Leone, will have to work with a great sense of responsibility and the importance of our task during this fifty-sixth session.

Indeed, as indicated by the Chairman in his opening statement, we may at times feel a strong sense of consternation. We began our work appropriately with a minute of silence. Our work in this Committee was launched on a good footing on 12 September, when the Security Council and the General Assembly shortly thereafter, unanimously, expressed through their resolutions the position of the international community.

This Committee must play an important role in contributing to international peace and security, because the agenda we have adopted sets out an extremely important task and challenge for us to pursue in our work. The eyes of the world are on the United Nations as it assumes that task. The United Nations will receive from this Committee and the General Assembly a vision of the issues that are at the very epicentre of the Organization's political work, as well as the legal vision we can provide, as indicated by a previous speaker.

I therefore wish to express our willingness to cooperate and join forces with all members of the Bureau and, in particular, with all members of the Committee in work which, I hope, will be fruitful and effectively accomplished. As we contribute to the effectiveness of this Committee, we will help to make our world safer, more peaceful and prosperous for all humanity.

Once again, I wish to express my personal emotion and enthusiasm, and those of the delegation of Venezuela, with respect to my election.

The Chairman: I am confident that I can count on the very active assistance and cooperation of the representative of Venezuela, Vice-Chairman of the Committee. At the same time, I also want to thank him very much for his important observations concerning the international context in which we are working in the fields of paramount importance of security and international security issues.

I call on the representative of Belgium, Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium), Vice-Chairman of the Committee (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by thanking wholeheartedly all the members of our Committee for having elected me to the Bureau. They may rest assured that I will do my utmost to contribute actively to the work of the Committee.

As has been noted, I have had an opportunity in my previous functions to specialize in particular in European defence matters. It was only last year, when I assumed my functions here in New York, that I was closely confronted with the issues of security at the global level that are addressed in the First Committee. My work is therefore a challenge that I intend to meet.

As the Ambassador of Venezuela has just recalled, the Committee at this session will clearly have to confront many great challenges in the new context created by the events of the morning of 11 September. The consequences of those attacks are considerable in all areas and it is obvious that they will have to be taken into account in the work of our Committee.

In conclusion, I am particularly proud and happy to work under your enlightened guidance, Mr. Chairman, and with our colleagues on the Bureau, the representatives of Venezuela, the Republic of Korea and Sierra Leone.

The Chairman: Again, I am confident that I can count on the very active assistance and cooperation of the representative of Belgium, Vice-Chairman of the Committee. I would mention, by the way, that, obviously, questions of security in Europe and in the world are closely interrelated today, given that we all live on the same planet. The experience that the representative of Belgium has accumulated in Europe will definitely be of great benefit to this Committee in the forthcoming weeks.

I call on the representative of Sierra Leone, Rapporteur of the Committee.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone), Rapporteur of the Committee: First of all, let me thank you, Sir, and members of this Committee for electing me to this very high office. My delegation, a small delegation, appreciates it very much and would like to pledge its cooperation with you and the other members of the Bureau. We will work earnestly to ensure that the Committee achieves its objectives during this session.

This may not be the most important Committee in the United Nations or the General Assembly, but I think it is significant that we call it the First Committee, because we believe that security is perhaps the most important issue and preoccupation for humanity. The events of 11 September also draw our attention to the work that we have to do and underline the fact that, when we talk about war and disarmament, we should think not only about nuclear weapons, but also about conventional weapons. It is significant also that the events of 11 September draw attention to another type of weapon, which I can call the "non-conventional" weapon.

We pledge our support. We have an uphill battle and I think this Committee can make a significant contribution to peace and security, not only in areas of conflict, but also in other parts of the world. We have a problem and we believe that the world is getting together. It is a smaller world. No matter what your military strength or might is, we live in an interdependent world and cooperation and good will should be the guideline of all our deliberations.

I hope that we shall work together and make a contribution to international security during the coming weeks.

The Chairman: I personally took note very attentively of those remarks on non-conventional weapons. As those remarks come from a representative of Sierra Leone, I can assure him that we all understand his preoccupations. I also want to thank him for his expression of willingness to cooperate closely with me and the other officers of the Committee. I am certain I express not only my own feelings but also those of the three Vice-Chairmen and the secretariat of the Committee when I say that it is our intention to

work as efficiently as possible, in close cooperation with the Rapporteur and the other members of the bureau during the current session on the many important issues that were mentioned here in anticipation of our substantive work, even if today's meeting is an organizational meeting.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would like to draw the Committee's attention to document A/C.1/56/1, which contains a letter dated 19 September 2001 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly, informing me that the General Assembly at its 3rd meeting decided to allocate 21 agenda items to the First Committee for its consideration: items 64 to 84. Despite the short time we had, in keeping with previous practice and assisted by the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sattar, I undertook a number of informal consultations with individual delegations, to the extent possible, concerning this programme of work and timetable as they are contained in another document before the Committee, document A/C.1/56/CRP.1. The Committee may recall that in the course of our informal consultations on Tuesday, 2 October, I sought and received members' ad referendum agreement concerning this draft programme of work and timetable for the First Committee for the current session.

However, before proceeding to give a fuller account of the programme of work and timetable that are being proposed, I would like to indicate that the draft programme of work and the timetable have been prepared taking into account a number of initiatives proposed over the past several years, including the General Assembly's decision at its fifty-second session, decision 52/416 B, on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. In this connection, I also took into account paragraph 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which reads as follows,

> "The First Committee and the Fourth Committee shall not meet simultaneously and may consider meeting in a sequential manner during the regular session of the General Assembly."

In accordance with the established practice, the First Committee commences its substantive work, as reflected in the draft programme of work and timetable, on Monday, 8 October 2001. As for the closing date of the work of the Committee, members will recall that, under the same decision of the General Assembly it was agreed that the First Committee should make every effort to conduct and conclude its substantive work, with the most efficient use of time and resources, in no less than 30 meetings and in a time frame not exceeding five weeks.

In view of that, I shall make every effort, with the Committee's assistance and cooperation, of course, to conclude the work of the Committee, as recommended by the General Committee, on Friday, 9 November 2001. I would like to say that concluding the work of the Committee early would enable the plenary of the General Assembly to consider the reports of the Main Committees, including this one, during the early part of December. Therefore, the First Committee's substantive session will run, as I have mentioned, from Monday, 8 October to Friday, 9 November, which gives the Committee a maximum of 31 meetings to consider the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly.

I would like to point out here that last year the Committee had at its disposal the same number of meetings, of which it utilized a total of 28. Therefore, I think that if we make a concerted and sincere attempt to utilize our resources in an effective and efficient manner, we can indeed accomplish our task without undue difficulties during this regular session.

Following the consultations I mentioned here earlier, and also drawing upon the experience that has evolved over the years, I have arrived at the proposed programme of work and timetable contained in CRP.1. It will be observed that consideration of items allocated to the First Committee would proceed in three phases. This is also reflected in the draft programme of work and timetable.

We will have three phases of work. The Committee will begin its substantive session on Monday, 8 October with a single general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items which have been allocated to this Committee. A total of 11 meetings from 8 October to 19 October are devoted to this single general debate. This will be phase one. In this regard, I would like to appeal to delegations to kindly limit the time for the delivery of statements — if at all possible, and I hope it is possible — to 15 minutes, in order to enable all those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate

to do so within the short time allocated for that purpose.

I would also like to invite those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible so that the Committee will be able to fully and constructively utilize its time and the conference resources available to it.

It should also be noted that the deadline for the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be Monday, 8 October at 6 p.m.

The second phase of the work of the Committee will be a thematic discussion on items as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions that will be submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items. So we will have a thematic discussion and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions in the second phase. This phase will cover the period from 22 October to 30 October. A total of 8 meetings will be allocated for that purpose. I hope that at that stage of the work of the Committee, delegations will make specific comments on the topics to be considered, so that we will not have a simple repetition of the general debate of the first phase. In this regard, I would like to inform members that in order to facilitate the work of the Committee and also to give sufficient time to delegations for consultations, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions on all disarmament and related international security items will be Thursday, 18 October at 6 p.m. With members' cooperation, I intend to maintain this deadline for the submission of the draft resolutions.

Delegations are encouraged to introduce draft resolutions as early as possible in order to enable others to seek necessary instructions from their capitals as well as to carry out adequate consultations. Furthermore, it is imperative that delegations submit those draft resolutions that could entail programme budget implications as early as possible in order to enable the Secretariat to make the necessary preparations on time. That will also enable the Committee to take on them with a view to meeting the mandatory deadline for their submission to the Fifth Committee.

I would also like to inform delegations that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of draft resolutions before they can be acted upon by the General Assembly. I accordingly ask them to keep in mind that financial aspect of our work.

The third phase of the work of this Committee — namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions — will be from 31 October to 9 November. In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, a total of 11 meetings has been allocated to that third phase of the work of the Committee.

It is my intention to retain the voting procedure, which involves the grouping of draft resolutions by clusters, during this session. In due course I shall present to the Committee specific proposals concerning the matter of clustering.

Based on the programme of work and timetable now before the Committee, it is my belief that, as I stated earlier, we will be in a position to efficiently consider all the agenda items allocated to us within the available time and to successfully conclude our work by Friday, 9 November. That is a real possibility.

I should like to conclude these remarks concerning our programme of work and timetable by reminding delegations of the need to maintain the requisite degree of flexibility in the process of implementing them in order, if necessary, to enhance the effectiveness of the organization of work. Let us try to stick to our timetable and not lose sight of the flexibility that might be required as we begin the Committee's substantive work.

As I mentioned earlier, the programme of work and timetable were already considered and approved on an ad referendum basis at the informal meeting of the Committee on Tuesday, 2 October. Therefore, if there is no objection, I shall take it that the draft programme of work and timetable meet with the approval of the Committee and are adopted.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I should now like to draw the attention of the Committee to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly which affect the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in decision 34/401, in particular its provisions dealing with explanations of vote, rights of reply and budgetary and financial questions, which I intend to apply, with the cooperation of all members.

In order to make full use of the time and facilities available to the Committee, I intend, again with the Committee's cooperation and understanding, to open the meetings of the Committee promptly at 10 a.m. — perhaps at 10.05 a.m., but no later — and 3 p.m., respectively. I shall endeavour to close the meetings at 1 p.m. and t 6 p.m., respectively. In this regard, I appeal to all speakers, especially the first three speakers at any given meeting, to kindly be present in the Conference Room on time. I also urge all other members of the Committee to attend the meetings of the Committee on time and in person — to have a representative of their delegation present. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of punctuality in the interests of ensuring an effective and orderly organization of our work and achieving economy for the Organization. We are talking about the money of our own taxpayers all across the globe. I trust that delegations will heed this humble appeal from the Chair.

At the same time, I wish to point out that it is my intention to convene meetings of the Committee only when a sufficient number of speakers are inscribed on my list. As a general rule, we should have no fewer than five speakers inscribed on the list for a given meeting so that we can utilize the time and resources available to us in the most effective manner possible and obviate the need to close our meetings early for lack of speakers. Resources allocated to a meeting cancelled at an appropriate time may be released for other meetings held within or outside the framework of the First Committee.

In this connection, I would like to inform members that during the main part of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the First Committee utilized 67 per cent of its allocated conference resources and lost 22 hours and 20 minutes owing to late starts and early adjournments of meetings. As members will see, the First Committee's utilization factor of conference resources has been below the benchmark of 80 per cent. Again, I count on the cooperation of members in improving the situation and achieving the optimum utilization of conference services this year.

I have one more request of a practical nature — a request that is becoming quite traditional these days. I kindly ask colleagues to switch off their cellular phones during the proceedings of the Committee. If they want to make a phone call, they can always leave the room and return to their seats later. I hope that that request, too, will meet with the understanding and full support of delegations over the next couple of weeks.

I would also like to tell the Committee that our regular meeting place will be Conference Room 4, the traditional location of First Committee meetings. The organizational meetings — both the formal and informal parts — are a departure from our regular practice. Next time we meet, it will be in Conference Room 4.

I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Mohammad Sattar.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to draw attention to the following points concerning the organization of work.

During this session, the General Assembly has once again decided to depart from the rule that one quarter of the members must be present before a meeting of a Main Committee may be declared open and a debate permitted to proceed. The Assembly made this recommendation on the understanding that such a departure from the rule did not involve any permanent change in the relevant provisions of rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure, pertaining to a quorum for the opening of meetings, whereby a majority of members must be present for any decision to be taken.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items will be closed on Monday, 8 October at 6 p.m.

A number of delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the general debate, and the Secretariat has taken note of those requests. Delegations wishing to participate in the general debate are urged to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience, so that the Committee can fully and efficiently utilize the time and conference facilities available to it.

Mr. Chairman, as you noted in your statements, members of the Committee are requested to kindly submit draft resolutions, especially those resolutions with programme budget implications, as far in advance as possible, in order to allow sufficient time for preparation by the Secretariat of the estimate of expenditure and for its consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as to provide enough time for consultations.

This would undoubtedly facilitate the Secretariat's task in processing the draft resolutions in order to make them available to the Committee as soon as possible. In this regard, I would like to request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions, amendments and the names of sponsors should be submitted to the secretariat of the Committee in writing, in order to ensure accuracy and to avoid any possible misunderstandings. Request for the use of conference rooms for group meetings should also be submitted in writing as early as possible, so that the necessary arrangements may be made in time.

I should also like to draw your attention to document A/C.1/56/INF.1, which will be issued within a few days. The document will provide, for purposes of information, a ready reference list of all documents of the First Committee issued as of 4 October 2001. That list will be updated as appropriate.

Delegations are also requested to kindly submit their lists of membership to the Secretariat as soon as possible, so that the Committee's membership list can be circulated as early as possible. Delegations are requested to kindly provide the Conference Officers with a minimum of 60 copies of all prepared statements for conference-servicing purposes. These, I would like to point out, are in addition to the copies required for any necessary general distribution among delegations.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to give you, as well as the other Officers of the Committee and all delegations, the firmest assurances of the support and cooperation of the secretariat of the First Committee and, of course, of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for your observations and your cooperation with the Chair. Let me say that I am looking forward to working with you in a good spirit of openness and efficacy over the next couple of few weeks. Therefore, I propose to adjourn this meeting now. As decided, the Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 8 October, at 10.00 a.m. in Conference Room 4.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.